



Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur

Humanities and Social Sciences

ENG122A: Introduction to Linguistics

Assignment-1

Q1. Write what you understood of the poem in about 150 words.

Ans. The poem "A Story" by "Philip Levine" beautifully depicts the changing face of our mother earth and the corresponding social changes that we encounter in our day to day lives. The tone of the poet is of melancholy as he is in grief, remembering the old times when things were not what they are today. In the beginning, poet is in the past and skilfully depicts the scene of a house in the woods inhabited by a family. As per the poet's description, house appears to be adequately furnished but simultaneously not lavish. The children in the family are small, father is in the middle of this life span and mother is slogging her days in the kitchen. During this description, poet switches to the harsh reality of present where he finds the house to be abandoned, all of the wood cover around the house removed and rows and rows of other houses as far as the poet's sight goes. All the wood cover has been removed due to rapid urbanization and growing demand for housing and the new houses have been erected at the places where there were streams of green trees. Interestingly, the sole house that was previously there in the woods is devoid of any human presence. The poet's message is deep, and he very softly attacks the harsh reality of present.

Q2. Write a note in about 75-100 words on how you brought out the meaning.

Ans. I arrived at the previous understanding of the poem, thanks to the beautiful depiction of the scenario by the poet and because of my understanding of the notion of “conceptualization” process in Linguistics. Firstly, poet has used vivid expressions to describe the type of house, state of the family and that of wood cover around the house. These ‘Graphemic’ signs from the poet act as prompt for my rich ‘conceptualization’ process to form an internal picture of the outside word in my mind in the form of ‘concept’. These concepts born out of precepts which relates to the phenomenon of sensing the outside words and gathering all the encyclopaedic knowledge. These ‘concepts’ help me in forming an inner picture of what is being referred. Poets referral to the past and then present followed by drawing comparisons between the two scenarios helps in understanding the fact that the poet is comparing the past life with the present reality and he is in dismay out of the situation created now.
